

**Testimony Before the Human Services Committee
Opposing Governor's Bill 6846**

By Carol Miranda
Intern at the Legal Assistance Resource Center of Connecticut
Phone: 860-616-4474, Email: cmiranda@larcc.org

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My name is Carol Miranda and I am with the Legal Assistance Resource Center of Connecticut. We advocate legislatively and administratively for policies which benefit low-income people as well as produce community education pamphlets and other publications, and provide workshops on poverty-related issues.

I am opposing the proposed budget cuts by Governor Malloy because they tremendously cut vital service programs which affect the poorest people of the state who therefore need them the most in order to have even a minimal standard of living.

The area I am most concerned with is its effects on low-income healthcare, HUSKY. If the budget goes through as proposed it will move low income, parent HUSKY recipients – including, pregnant women – and into Access Health where they will have to pay insurance premiums they simply cannot afford, which will cause them to not seek medical attention when needed.

I am someone who currently depends on HUSKY as my insurance so I know the importance of the program for not only parents and their children, but for anyone. I am currently 21 years old and at the age of 16 I was in a car accident that left me with three herniated disks in my lumbar that cause me constant pain. My injury heavily interferes with my every day life, making me often unable to go to class, to work, or even do basic things like bend over to tie my shoes due to the inability to move from pain.

My mother had insurance through her job which covered my medical expenses for a year, but after that I was left without insurance for two years, so for two years I went without any specialized medical care for my condition because I simply could not afford it. As a low-income 18 year old worrying not only was I worrying about regular issues such as getting into college, I had to worry about what would happen if my pain got to the point where I had to be hospitalized – as it had in the past – and how I would possibly pay for it when the bills came.

When I turned 19 I went to the Danbury DSS office, where I grew up, and I applied for HUSKY and was so thankfully accepted. Only through HUSKY have I been able to get the medical treatment that I need to live with my condition as best I can. It is because of HUSKY that I will be getting a surgery in May to correct my spinal issues; it is HUSKY that will allow me to lead a normal life, one without the constant fear of doing things that are so difficult for me yet effortless for most everyone else such as walk or stand for more than 15 minutes.

If you move people who truly depend on HUSKY, to Access Health, they may not be able to afford their premiums and won't be able to treat their medical conditions. Without regular treatment so many people would probably end up in the hospital, as has happened to me twice in this new year alone, costing the State lots more money in medical care and lost tax revenue because I won't be able to work.

I urge the General Assembly, the Human Services Committee, to please stop the reliance on cuts that will cost jobs and most of all devastate the public services that we all care about and need. I urge the assembly to please do away with all the unfair and outdated tax breaks and to ask more of those who have the highest ability to pay rather than continue to take from those who have nothing more to give.

Thank you.